

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 07619 092050Z

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ACTION ARA-20

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TAGS: PINS, MX

SUBJ: GOM ANNOUNCES CAPTURE OF NON-POLITICAL KIDNAP GANG.

REF: MEXICO 7448

1. SUMMARY: FEDERAL DISTRICT PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE HAS ANNOUNCED CAPTURE BY DIRECCION FEDERAL DE SEGURIDAD (DFS) OF SIX OUT OF SEVEN MEMBERS OF GANG RESPONSIBLE FOR RECENT KIDNAP-MURDERS OF TWO YOUNG MEXICO CITY RESIDENTS. GOM ACCOUNT INDICATES THAT KIDNAPPERS WERE OUT ONLY FOR MONEY AND HAD NO POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS OR CONNECTIONS. THESE CRIMES, COMING ON TOP OF POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED KIDNAP-MURDER OF EUGENIO GARZA SADA IN MONTERREY LAST MONTH, HAD CONTRIBUTED TO CLIMATE OF UNEASE IN MEXICO CITY AND ELSEWHERE; THEIR RESOLUTION, AND THE EVIDENT ABSENCE OF POLITICAL MOTIVATION, MAY TAKE SOME OF THE HEAT OFF THE GOM. END SUMMARY.

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

2. FEDERAL DISTRICT PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE CONVENED PRESS CONFERENCE OCT 8 TO ANNOUNCE THAT DFS HAD SOLVED TWO SEPTEMBER KIDNAP-MURDER CASES INVOLVING SONS OF WELL-TO-DO MEXICO CITY FAMILIES AND HAD CAPTURED SIX OF THE SEVEN MEN RESPONSIBLE. FIRST CASE WAS THAT OF GABINO GOMEZ ROCH, SON OF DIRECTOR GENERAL OF BANCO MEXICANO (REFTEL). SECOND INVOLVED 22-YEAR-OLD DENTIST NAMED

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PAGE 02 MEXICO 07619 092050Z

RUBEN ENCISO ARELLANO, KIDNAPPED SEPT 12, WHOSE BODY WAS NOT

FOUND UNTIL OCT 3. IN EACH CASE PROSPEROUS-LOOKING VICTIM WAS REPORTEDLY CHOSEN AT RANDOM AND WITHOUT PRIOR SURVEILLANCE AND WAS KILLED WITHIN HOURS AFTER KIDNAP, BEFORE RANSOM NEGOTIATIONS WITH FAMILY HAD BEGUN. INFORMATION ON FAMILY AND AMOUNT OF RANSOM THAT MIGHT BE EXTRACTED WAS OBTAINED FROM EACH VICTIM BEFORE HE WAS KILLED. GOMEZ' FAMILY PAID FIVE MILLION PESOS (US\$400,000) AND ENCISCO'S PAID APPROXIMATELY 1.3 MILLION PESOS (US\$104,000); LARGE PERCENTAGE OF MONEY WAS RECOVERED.

3. LEADER OF GANG IDENTIFIED AS JORGE DE SAN NICOLAS ARJONA, 32, SAID TO BE AN ARGENTINE CITIZEN OF MOROCCAN ORIGIN WHO ARRIVED IN MEXICO IN 1969 AS TOURIST. DE SAN NICOLAS HAD REMAINED HERE ILLEGALLY EVER SINCE, WORKING IN JUNIOR EXECUTIVE POSITIONS IN SEVERAL PROMINENT HOTELS IN ACAPULCO AND ELSEWHERE, AND HAD RECRUITED HIS SIX MEXICAN ACCOMPLICES, MOSTLY IN THEIR 20'S, FROM AMONG HOTEL EMPLOYEES HE KNEW. GANG HAD REPORTEDLY PLANNED TO ASSEMBLE IN TIJUANA, ENTER US FROM THERE, AND ULTIMATELY PROCEED TO SPAIN. ONE MEMBER WAS ARRESTED IN TIJUANA, OTHERS IN PUEBLA, CULIACAN, AND FEDERAL DISTRICT. THEY FACE PRISON TERMS OF UP TO 40 YEARS. END UNCLASSIFIED.

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4. COMMENT: TO JUDGE FROM PRESS ACCOUNTS, INDISCREET BEHAVIOR (E.G., USE OF VICTIMS' CREDIT CARDS) BY KIDNAPPERS LED TO BREAK IN CASE. NEVERTHELESS, OVERWORKED DFS APPEARS TO HAVE ACTED IN RAPID AND PROFESSIONAL MANNER, WRAPPING UP FAR-FLUNG SUSPECTS LESS THAN TEN DAYS AFTER IDENTIFICATION OF GOMEZ' BODY.

5. LURID NATURE OF CRIMES (WHICH ARE BEING DESCRIBED AS "CYNICAL" AND "MACCHIAVELLIAN" IN LOCAL PRESS) ENSURES THAT THEIR RESOLUTION WILL RECEIVE WIDESPREAD PUBLIC ATTENTION. ABSENCE OF POLITICAL MOTIVATION ON PART OF PERPETRATORS AND EFFECTIVE POLICE WORK MAY TO SOME EXTENT DEFUSE CRITICISM OF GOM AND ATTENDANT CONTROVERSY (SEE MEXICO 7221 AND A-511) THAT FOLLOWED SEPT 17 KILLING OF MONTERREY INDUSTRIALIST AND PHILANTHROPIST EUGENIO GARZA SADA IN ABORTIVE KIDNAP ATTEMPT BY POLITICALLY-MOTIVATED GROUP, SEVERAL OF WHOSE MEMBERS ARE STILL AT LARGE. GENERALIZED PUBLIC CONCERN OVER LAW-AND-ORDER ISSUE IS APT TO CONTINUE, HOWEVER. MCBRIDE

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PAGE 03 MEXICO 07619 092050Z

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